

# THE CLOSTER NATURE CENTER

P.O. BOX 80, CLOSTER NJ 07624 [www.closternaturecenter.org](http://www.closternaturecenter.org)

By the pond on Ruckman Road

February, 2024

## Thank you for supporting Closter Nature Center in 2023!

Every year, your membership and donations enable us to offer a variety of educational programs, events, lectures and more. We appreciate your ongoing support.

We have some exciting programs lined up for 2024. Hope you will join us!  
See you on the trails!

## Activities and Events:

### Come join Nature Marc for a Season of Nature Fun and Science

We will follow the natural world as winter turns to spring.  
Animals, hikes and exploration will all be a part of this wonderful winter after-school program.

**Tuesdays-** Pre-K4 and Kindergarten

**Wednesdays-** 1st- 3rd grades

**Thursdays-** 4th-6th grades

**Time:** 3:45 - 5:00 PM

**Depending on availability, 5-week session enrollment is ongoing!**

Member Fee: \$125 for 5-weeks

Non-Member fee: \$150 for 5-weeks

## February Break Nature Program

Need something fun and educational for the kids to do during February break?  
We'll have four days of nature exploration and discovery here at the Closter Nature Center

**Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>,**

9:00 am - 10:30 am 1st - 3rd grade

11:00 am - 12:00 pm PreK 4- Kindergarten

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm 4th - 6th grade

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm 1st - 3rd grade

**PreK 4- Kindergarten \$80 for Members / \$100 Non-members**

**1st to 6th Grade \$100 Members / \$120 Non-members**

For more information, check our website at [www.closternaturecenter.org](http://www.closternaturecenter.org) or sign-up directly on Community Pass: <https://register.communitypass.net/closter>. **Questions, email**

[admin@closternaturecenter.org](mailto:admin@closternaturecenter.org)

## Winter Hike with Marc February 17<sup>th</sup> at 1PM.

Explore the trails of the Closter Nature Center with Naturalist Marc Gussen. Weather permitting, we will have a fire and roast marshmallows. **Please dress for the weather!** Boards can be slippery in winter -- shoes with rubber soles are a must. We will meet at the cabin at 1pm. **Suggested Donation: \$5.**

### Cute Kid's Quote:

I was walking in the hall of a local elementary school when a group of kindergarteners came walking past me. One young boy gazed up at me and then turned to the boy next to him and said "Take a look at this guy!"

-Marc Gussen

### Naturalist's Notes:

While some may doubt the underlying causes of climate change, the symptoms are so evident and pervasive that it is slowly but surely becoming scientific fact. The idea that "We" could be the root of all this is tough for some to accept but that makes little difference when it comes to the plight of polar bears and other organisms on the fringe. Every living thing has a range or geographic area where it can be found. For example, most polar bears live from north of the arctic circle to the north pole. As the earth warms, we see a trend in the northern hemisphere where southern species move north. Often with this northern expansion comes a push north of the southern limits.

Right now we are seeing this at play in our forest, with a more common than ever tree, the sweet gum. Once a tree at the northern end of its range in New Jersey it is gaining a foot hold in our forest. It is a native specie, but it is also one of the least important tree species we have when it comes to benefits to wildlife.

Not only is the sweet gum's range expanding because of warming winters, but also because of the increase in population of the white-tailed deer. As is typical when it comes to ecology more than one factor is often at play, and together there can be profound effects. When deer eat the seedlings and saplings of native oaks, maples and hickories, others that are not on the deer's menu fill in the gaps; in this case it is the sweet gum expanding in our forest.

Whenever there is change in nature there are winners and losers. Some organisms benefit from the changes and survive or even thrive; others can't handle the changes, their populations are diminished or they might even go extinct. A lot of how this pans out depends on many factors, with one important one being the organisms' range. Warming temperatures can easily push sweet gums north but polar bears have nowhere to go.

Let's hope that with a combination of good science, technology and a new-found level of stewardship we can avert some of the impending outcomes and limit the number of organisms that can't deal with the changes and have nowhere to go.

See you on the trails, Marc Gussen, Naturalist